

## PLANMARYLAND PLANNING AREA - AGENCY REVIEW SUMMARY COMMENTS

**Applying Jurisdiction:** Town of Secretary (Dorchester County)

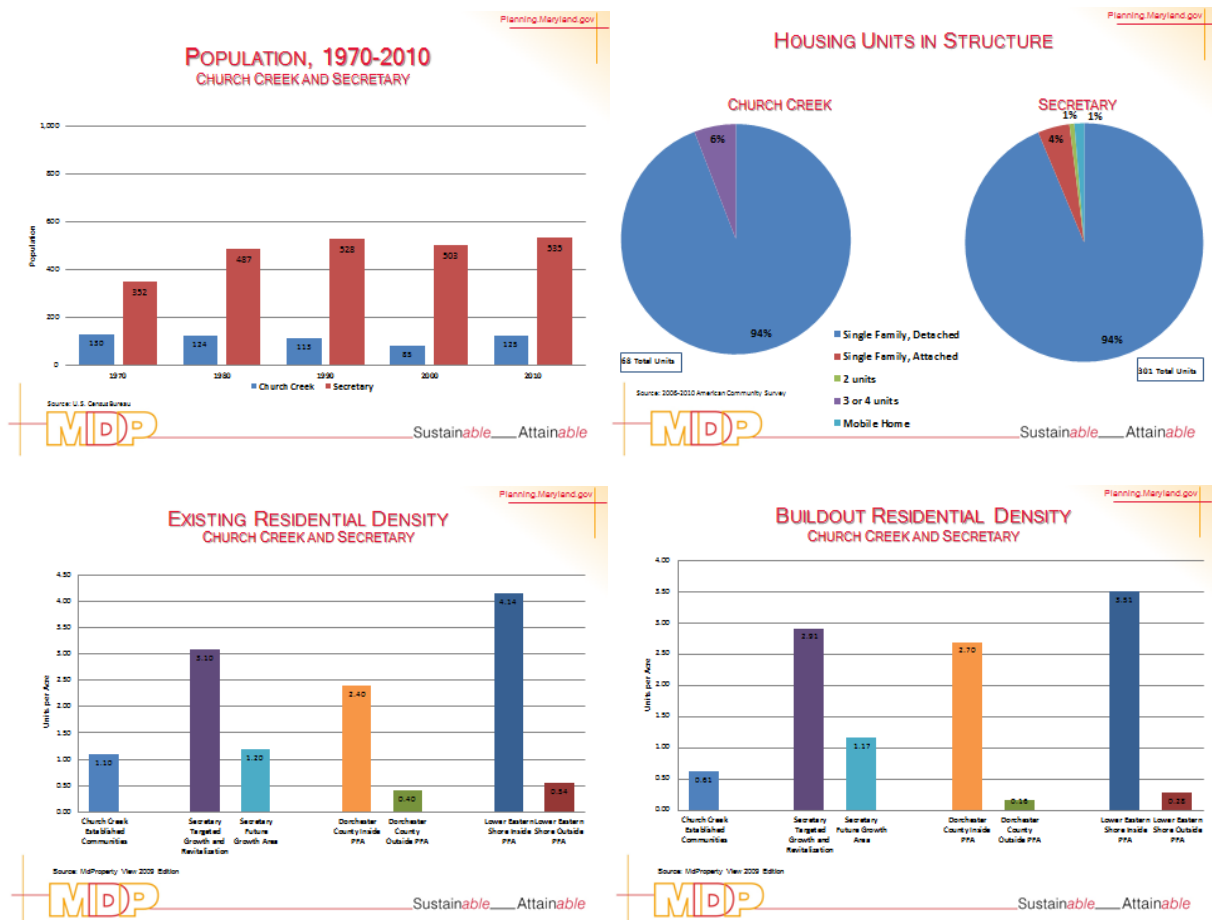
**Date of Summary Comments:** 5/3/13

### Overview of Existing Community

The Town of Secretary is relatively homogenous in character, with the vast majority of residences being single-family structures. There are numerous natural features within the Town including streams and stream buffers, wetlands, floodplain areas, and habitats of threatened and endangered species. Approximately 133 acres or roughly 81% of the Town is within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. Any new development within the Town's designated Critical Area must comply with the provisions of the Town of Secretary's Critical Area Program, which was based on the State Critical Area Criteria and Regulations. The Town shares a Public Waste Water Treatment Plant with the Town of East New Market, and has its own Public Water Treatment System.

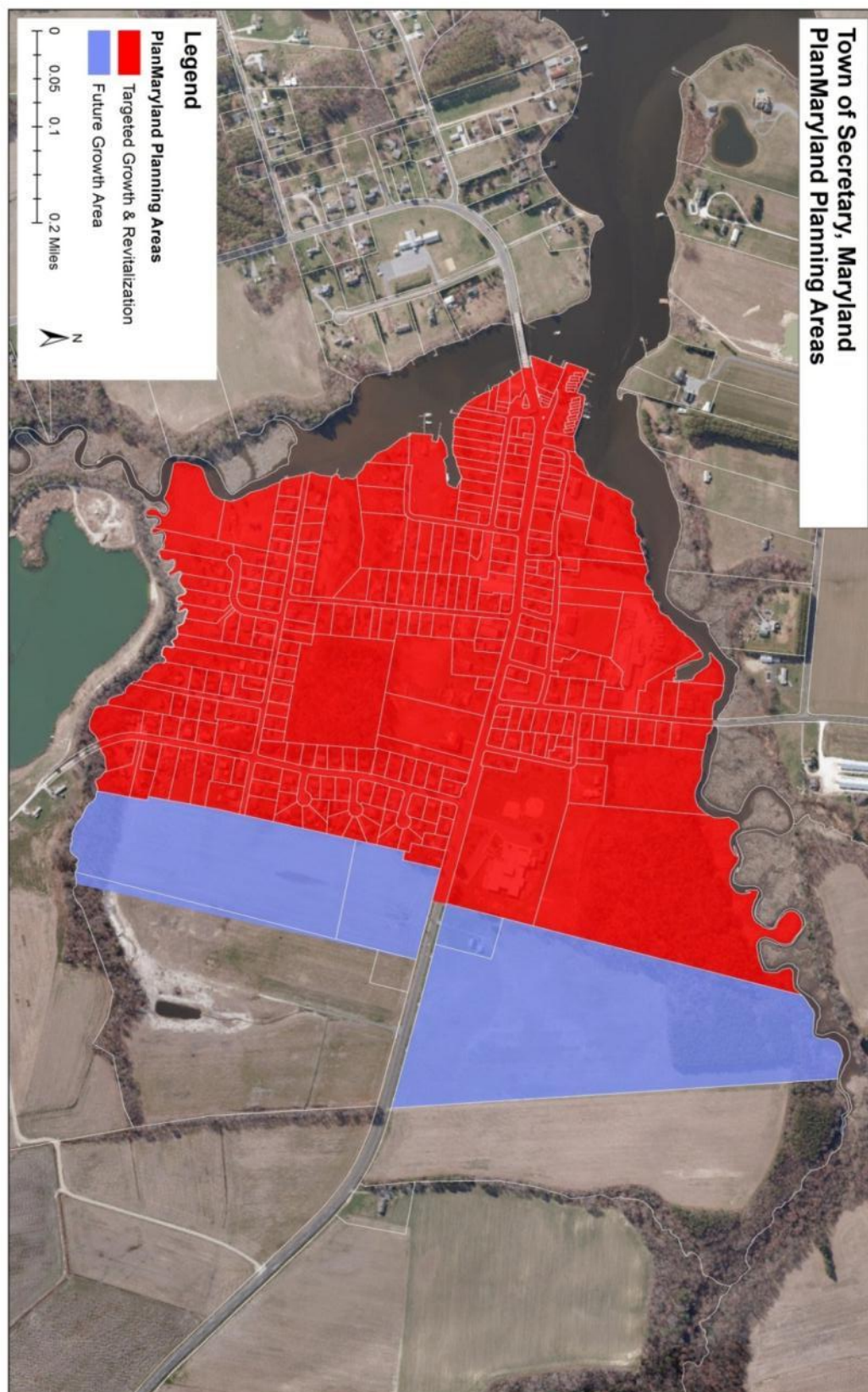
The Town is primarily a residential 'bedroom' community with a very limited commercial land use. Commercial uses within the Town include an ice plant, country store and small restaurant. There are two industrial-type businesses which are seafood packing houses are all that remains of a once thriving seafood industry. The 2010 U.S. Census indicates a population of 535 persons.

### Summary Indicators



The Smart Growth Subcabinet on April 24, 2013 endorsed, as proposed, the Town of Secretary's Targeted Growth and Revitalization Area and its Future Growth Area, as well as identified portions of the town appropriate for the following Preservation/Conservation Planning Areas - Natural Resources and Climate Change Impact, as depicted on the following maps, for incorporation into PlanMaryland.

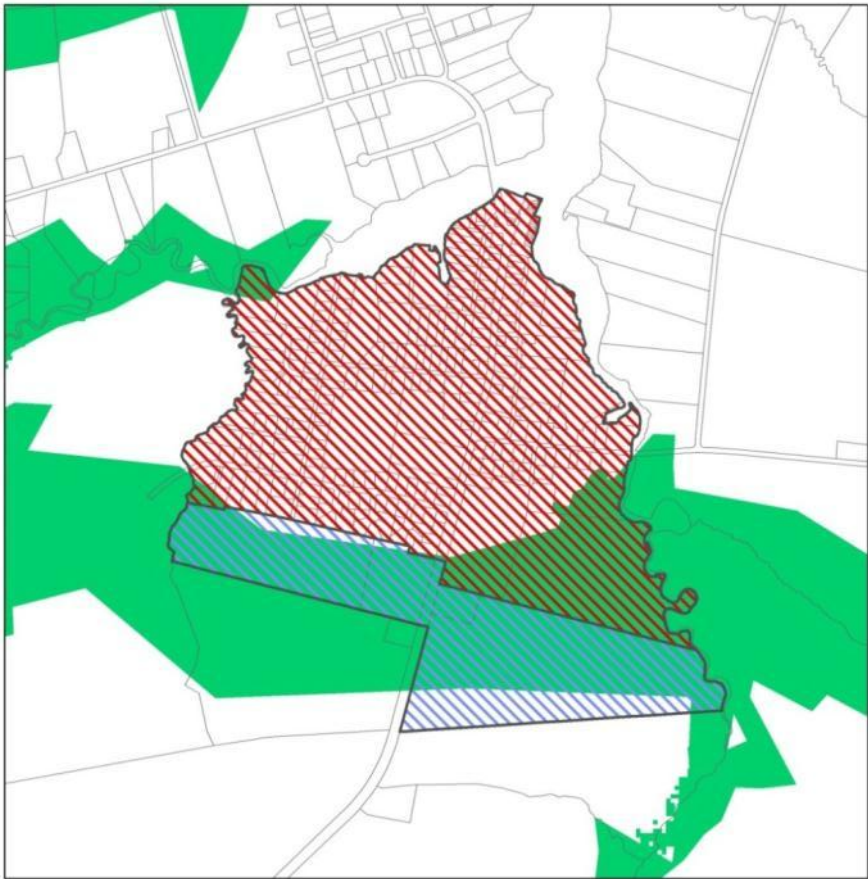
Town of Secretary  
PlanMaryland Planning Areas (Places)



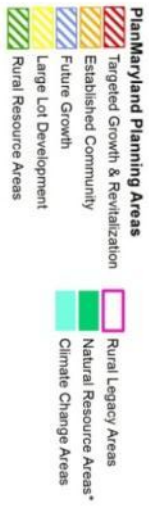
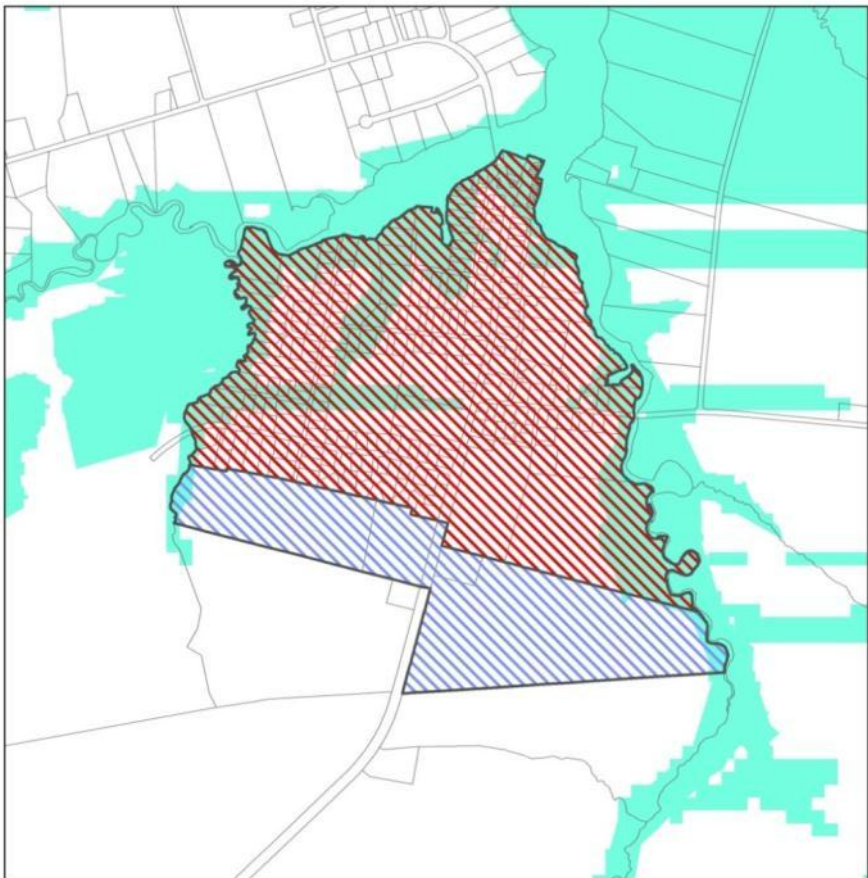


# **Town of Secretary PlanMaryland Planning Areas**

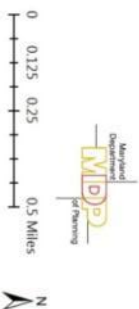
**Natural Resource Areas**



**Climate Change Areas**



\* Natural Resource Areas include Priority Preservation Areas, Green Prints, Targeted Ecological Areas, Wildlife & Rare Species Habitats, Forests Important for Water Quality, and Forests and Green Infrastructure. Areas not shown but should also be considered are Green Prints Non-Tidal, Tidal Bay and Coastal Ecosystems Fisheries.



## **Assessment of Secretary's Targeted Growth and Revitalization Area (TGRA)**

The proposed TGRA encompasses the entire municipal limits, which is a Pre-defined Priority Funding Area (Municipality).

### **A. Location Guidelines:**

**Consensus of Core Agency Review:** Proposed Town of Secretary TGRA complies with Location Guidelines – YES

#### **Comments and Observations:**

The Town of Secretary's TGRA lies entirely within a Pre-defined Priority Funding Area (Municipality).

It should be noted that this town has not submitted a Sustainable Community application, at this time. Given the limited resources available under the Sustainable Community program and the demand for the State's capital programs targeted to Sustainable Communities, town of this size applying on their own may have limited ability to participate in the Sustainable Community program. If Secretary is interested in participating in the Sustainable Community program, it is recommended the town consider partnering with Dorchester County or a consortium of municipalities in the county.

### **B. Other Levels of the Planning Area Guidelines: Purpose & Intent, Supporting Objectives, and Local Management & Planning Practices:**

#### **Purpose & Intent:**

##### **Comments and Observations:**

The Town of Secretary's Comprehensive Plan addresses many of the TGRA "Purpose and Intent" provisions. Given the scale and isolated nature of the community, Secretary does not plan to have "dense, mixed-use growth" or "integrate transportation...to provide a high level of accessibility to goods, series and resources." However, with respect to applicable PlanMaryland purpose and intent clauses, the Town of Secretary closely aligns with PlanMaryland. The Town does call for the TGRA to accommodate growth, through infill and redevelopment, prior to expansion of growth into the proposed Municipal Growth Areas. The Town also calls for the increase in desirable residential and commercial development within the Town and the minimization of market pressure for growth outside of PFA's.

#### **Land Use Objectives:**

##### **Comments and Observations:**

Town of Secretary's 2010 Comprehensive Plan identifies a series of land use objectives to encourage growth in the town, stabilize residential development, and protect surrounding natural resources.

The Town's comprehensive plan policies indicate that Secretary would like to grow, yet the amount of growth desired is modest scale and in character with the existing patterns of development.

#### **Transportation Objectives:**

##### **Comments and Observations:**

Town of Secretary's 2010 Comprehensive Plan calls for several transportation strategies related to creating scenic gateways, promoting streetscape and other improvements that protect the character of Main Street, and coordinating planning and installation of pedestrian and bicycle walks.

The Town of Secretary identifies comprehensive plan policies to improve the connectivity of the existing street grid, expand biking and walking opportunities, and extend the street grid to future growth areas. It should be noted that there is currently extremely limited bus service to Secretary (Maryland Upper Shore Transit), though service is limited to 1 morning, 1 evening).

*Housing Objectives:*

**Comments and Observations:**

While the Town of Secretary did not include a specific housing element within the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the "Land Use Strategies" section contains several policies that address housing needs.

The condition of existing housing stock is not addressed in the application. Housing strategies are not addressed in PlanMaryland application or the 2010 comprehensive plan. It is not clear what the current needs are, or if any exist. Residential land use policies are fine, but are generic and lack the specificity needed to target resources effectively.

*Economic Objectives:*

**Comments and Observations:**

While the Town of Secretary did not include a specific Economic Development section in its 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the "Land Use Strategies" section contains several policies with respect to commercial and industrial uses.

Like the Housing Objectives, the Economic Objectives include standard language. There are no specific recommendations relating to existing commercial uses, such as the seafood packing houses.

Leverage existing assets and infrastructure, including heritage sites and scenic byways to support long term vitality and economic development.

*Public Needs that are Addressed:*

**Comments and Observations:**

The Town of Secretary has a well written, current comprehensive plan. They have adequate staff and the political will to ensure the goals and objectives of their comprehensive plan will be carried out to the greatest extent possible.

*Shortcomings in Addressing Public Priorities:*

**Comments and Observations:**

The most apparent shortcomings are the dated Subdivision Regulations (adopted 4/1/82) and Zoning Ordinance (adopted 12/7/78). The Town has adequate Staff to administer these regulations; however, the Town does not have the technical expertise (or funds to hire consultants) to update these implementation ordinances.

The jobs/housing imbalance is not addressed by existing plans, and there is no comprehensive plan economic development element. Without addressing the lack of jobs, additional households in Secretary are likely to have commutes that are longer than the county's average.

**C. Assessment of PlanMaryland Implementation Strategy Opportunities & Constraints.**

*Opportunities for State Agency Implementation:*

**Comments and Observations:**

The strong relationship between the Town of Secretary and the MDP, Lower Eastern Shore Regional Office (LES Office) provides an excellent opportunity to carry out PlanMaryland goals and objectives. In the recent past, the LES Office secured and managed a Coastal Zone Management, Coastal Community Initiative (CZM, CCI) Grant to do a complete update to the Town's Comprehensive Plan, and a CZM, CCI Grant to do a complete update to its Critical Area Ordinance. Should the LES Office find a funding source to update these important implementation ordinances, the Town of Secretary will be more than willing to incorporate the goals and objectives of PlanMaryland, as evidenced by it being the first community on the Eastern Shore to adopt a PlanMaryland map and application.

The goal of developing a “streets master plan” has the potential to increase opportunities to walk and bike in Secretary. Secretary should coordinate with MDOT and SHA on opportunities to improve bicycle and pedestrian connections.

There appear to be some limited opportunities, particularly along Main Street for improvements to, and/or adaptive reuse of seafood packing houses. However, those opportunities are not discussed in any detail.

*Implement Strategy Reservations due to Constraints:*

**Comments and Observations:**

With the exception of the severely dated Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, this reviewer feels that the Town is well positioned to accommodate phased growth, with an emphasis on infill and redevelopment as a priority, and to meet the Goals and Objectives of PlanMaryland.

Given the limited employment opportunities within Secretary, locating additional housing in Secretary will likely mean increasing the number of commutes originating from Secretary that are longer than the County’s average.

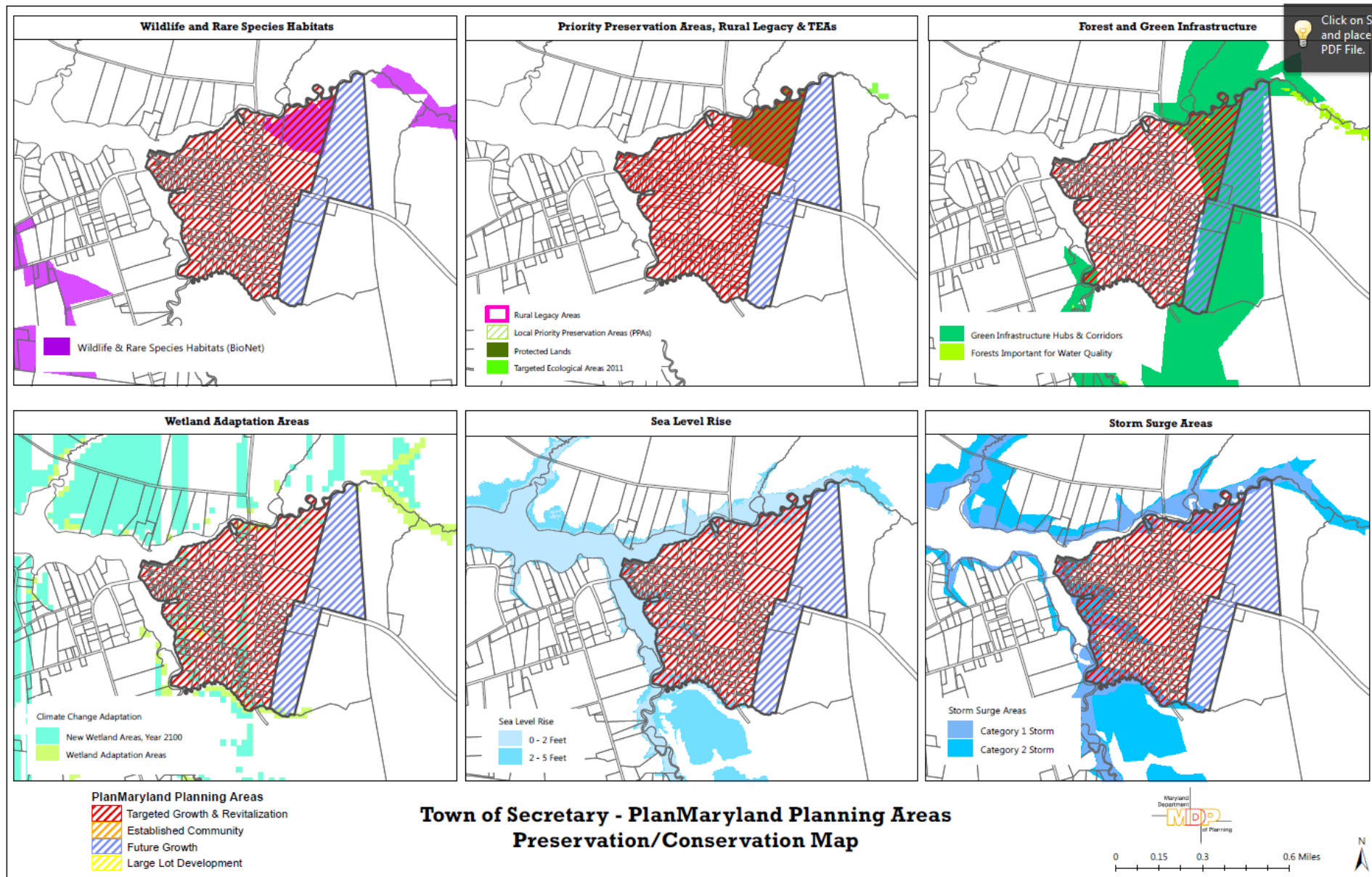
Secretary has not applied for Sustainable Community designation. There may be some, limited opportunities for targeted investment. If there is interest, it may be useful to meet with town officials to discuss.

*Other Comments and Questions about Implementation Strategies & Constraints in this Area.*

Future state planning efforts, including targeting and prioritization, will include the mapping and identification of preservation/conservation areas through the available GreenPrint and Climate Change Impact Area mapping resources. The state looks forward to partnering with the local communities on the identifying strategies for the conservation of natural resources and the reduction of climate induced vulnerability. See maps below. Use of State programs and resources in "Place" Planning Areas which overlap with "Preservation/ Conservation" areas currently targeted by State agencies will be subject to additional review and evaluation, to take into account the goals of both designations and ensure the most appropriate state actions and investment of resources.

State investment in Preservation/Conservation Areas will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis considering existing structures and investments, the needs, the potential hazards and long-term benefits, and the type of investment. Each agency evaluates state resource allocations differently based on its mission responsibility. State capital investments may be minimized in areas susceptible to Climate Change Impact and/or designed to be more resilient to impacts, like sea level rise.





GreenPrint Mapping Data that impact Secretary:

Targeted Growth & Revitalization Area

- BioNet Tier 4 – Located within County Park land
- Minimal opportunities for marsh migration
- There is a large block of forest lands that could be included in a natural resource overlay.
- There also is a trail system that could be included in an overlay.

Future Growth Area

- Intersects with a Green Infrastructure (GI) corridor, most of it existing in gap restoration opportunity
- The PlanMaryland application mentions maintaining nature trails system behind elementary school – perhaps this could compliment the Green Infrastructure planning and connect the GI hubs for broader GI connectivity.

General Preservation/Conservation Planning Area Comments on Secretary's Application:

- Secretary did not designate any Preservation/ Conservation Areas. The Town is strongly encouraged to consider using the PlanMaryland overlay process (specifically the Natural Resource Areas and Climate Change Impact Areas) to plan for the protection and existence of forestry resources, restoration opportunities and trail systems. This would include identifying the protected lands in forest near the creek as resource areas. They are functionally very important for protecting water quality, wildlife habitat, and downstream fisheries.
- The Town should consider working with the county to coordinate on regional Green Infrastructure, Restoration and Trail planning opportunities, particularly in the Targeted Growth and Revitalization Area. DNR recommends future growth in this area should take the green infrastructure connections into consideration.
- The Town of Secretary may be vulnerable to sea level rise and storm surge, especially to the north, west, and south areas bordering the river. Especially in areas of targeted and future growth, buffers, maintaining wetlands, and other precautions should be taken. These recommendations are meant to ensure that as communities revitalize key areas and grow in population, the growth is done in such a way as to reduce risk and the vulnerability of people and property. *With this regard, we commend the town for adopting 2' freeboard above the base flood elevation.*

For more specific guideline for sea level rise in Dorchester County, please see *Sea Level Rise:*

*Technical Guidance for Dorchester County:*

[http://dnr.maryland.gov/CoastSmart/pdfs/SeaLevel\\_Dorchester.pdf](http://dnr.maryland.gov/CoastSmart/pdfs/SeaLevel_Dorchester.pdf)

General Climate Comments:

- Maryland shorelines are highly susceptible to coastal hazards, such as hurricanes, nor'easters, floods, and storm surge. Almost 70% of Maryland's shoreline experiences severe erosion and more than half of some counties lie within the 100-year floodplain. Because of Maryland's vulnerability to coastal hazards, special precaution needs to be taken when planning for the future. The State is currently planning for one foot of sea level rise by 2050 and 3-4 feet of sea level rise by 2100. Even the slightest rise in sea levels will exacerbate already existing hazards. As storms like Sandy become more common and flooding becomes more frequent, planning at the state and local level should begin to reflect more extreme events in existing planning processes.
- It is important to consider sea level rise in hazard mitigation and emergency management planning, as well as in land-use planning. If a community is located in an especially vulnerable area that will be



- impacted by 0-2' of sea level rise inundation or the storm surge and flooding associated with a Category 1 hurricane, special attention should be paid to current and future growth areas. Additionally, special care should be taken to preserve existing wetlands and allow for their migration inland. Wetlands will help to naturally protect a community from gradual sea level rise, as well as storm events, by helping to accrete sediment and absorb wind and wave energy.
- There are resources currently available through Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and partner agencies to help communities plan for sea level rise and more frequent coastal flood events.
    - DNR's Chesapeake and Coastal Service (CCS) has developed a CoastSmart Communities Online Resource Center that includes web-based planning tools, storm surge inundation and sea level rise maps, training programs, staff resources, and access to local grants including the CoastSmart Communities Initiative (CCI) competitive grant program. This program provides financial and technical assistance to local governments to promote the incorporation of natural resource and/or coastal management issues into local planning and permitting activities. <http://dnr.maryland.gov/CoastSmart/>
    - The Maryland Emergency Management Agency's (MEMA) Hazard Mitigation Program provides resources, tools, and grants to assist communities in mitigation projects: <http://memamaryland.gov/memacommunity/Pages/Mitigation.aspx>.
    - The Maryland Department of the Environment has developed model floodplain ordinance language: [http://mdfloodmaps.com/pdfs/MD\\_FPM\\_Model\\_Ordinance.pdf](http://mdfloodmaps.com/pdfs/MD_FPM_Model_Ordinance.pdf).
    - The Woods Hole Sea Grant, Cape Cod Commission, and University of Hawaii Sea Grant have also developed model bylaw language that may be used to regulate development in coastal hazards area: <http://nsgl.gso.uri.edu/hawau/hawaut09001.pdf>
  - We would encourage keeping and expanding tree cover to maintain the character of an established and pleasant community, as well as improve water quality. Free tools to help communities assess tree canopy are available at <http://www.itreetools.org/>. The iTree Canopy tool allows a quick, quantitative measure of existing tree canopy and other tools can help identify where expanded tree canopy could provide the most ecological and community benefits. Generally, expanding tree cover near water and drainage pathways is a priority and most likely to support healthier fisheries.
  - During redevelopment, look for opportunities to increase infiltration, expand tree canopy, and avoid future conflicts between trees and other infrastructure like roads, pipes, and power lines. Information on Green Street practices can be found at <http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/greenstreets/projects.htm>. Some funding opportunities may be available, such as through the Chesapeake Bay Trust [http://www.cbtrust.org/site/c.miJPKXPCJnH/b.7735695/k.9142/Green\\_Streets.htm](http://www.cbtrust.org/site/c.miJPKXPCJnH/b.7735695/k.9142/Green_Streets.htm).
  - We would encourage involvement in local natural resource-based markets, reflecting the town's heritage of wooden shipbuilding. Examples include farmer's markets, arts/craft shows featuring local products, maritime history event, or new uses of local wood for high-efficiency wood heating.

## **Overview of Secretary's Proposed Future Growth Area**

The proposed Future Growth Area (FGA1) is located east of the Town boundaries on the south side of Main Street, and is approximately 24 acres in size. This FGA is identified within the Town's 2010 Comprehensive Plan Municipal Growth Element for municipal expansion, and is designated for future water and sewerage service within the Dorchester County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Master Plan. Concept plans were provided to the Town in the past to provide commercial services on the parcel adjacent to Main Street and to develop 40 homes on the parcel to the south. This growth area is seen as the main priority for the Town to accommodate growth expected to come via the County growth share.

Future Growth Area 2 (FGA2) is directly north of FGA1 and will be developed in a similar manner if the Town decides to annex this property. This FGA is also identified within the Town's 2010 Comprehensive Plan Municipal Growth Element, as a Municipal Growth Area, and is designated for future water and sewerage service within the Dorchester County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Master Plan. Although the priority annexation area for accommodating County growth is FGA1, the Town does not wish preclude other development options presented in FGA2. Moreover, if the County grows faster than expected within the 20 year horizon of this plan, the Town wants to be prepared to accept development in this area to implement its smart growth initiative.

The entire FGA2 area is approximately 41 acres, of which approximately 60% of the land is within the RCA Critical Area. It is expected that approximately eight acres of the land fronting Main Street will be set aside for mixed use development to continue the traditional pattern of Main Street, leaving approximately eight acres for residential development. This will provide approximately 32 homes for future growth without growth allocation.

## **Assessment of Secretary's Future Growth Area (FGA)**

### **A. Location Guidelines:**

**Consensus of Core Agency Review:** Proposed Town of Secretary FGAs comply with the Location Guidelines – YES

#### **Comments and Observations:**

The proposed FGAs meet all of PlanMaryland's locational criteria, since the FGAs are identified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan Municipal Growth Element (MGE) as a Municipal Growth Areas (MGAs), and are reflected within the Dorchester County Comprehensive Plan as recognized MGAs.

Yes, FGA1 and FGA2 are identified within the Town's 2010 Comprehensive Plan Municipal Growth Element and are designated for future water and sewerage service by the County.

The proposed Future Growth Areas do meet the criteria; however, the FGAs may compete with other parts of the town and reduce concentration of growth in the proposed TGRA.

### **B. Other Levels of the Planning Area Guidelines: Purpose & Intent, Supporting Objectives, and Local Management & Planning Practices:**

#### **Purpose & Intent:**

#### **Comments and Observations:**

As a result of the Town's recent adoption of a MGE and WRE (both of which considered the proposed future growth areas), and as the Town worked with the County to ensure the County recognized (and agreed upon) the proposed Future Growth Areas, the Town meets the PlanMaryland Purpose and Intent for Future Growth Areas. The Town has done a thorough analysis of the need for the proposed MGAs, the ability to provide for public services to accommodate the proposed MGAs, and has addressed inter-jurisdictional issues. .

Land Use Objectives:

**Comments and Observations:**

The Town of Secretary has an up-to-date (adopted 6/1/10) Comprehensive Plan with both a Municipal Growth Element (MGE) and a Water Resources Element (WRE). The MGE and WRE address the proposed growth areas, have a phased approach to utilizing the growth areas, and have considered the Town's ability to provide public service to these MGA's. The Comprehensive Plan's MGE provides for a timely phased annexation and development of the identified FGAs

Transportation Objectives:

**Comments and Observations:**

Comprehensive Plan's MGE for the Town of Secretary does not address transportation objectives specifically associated with the FGAs; however, the adopted Comprehensive Plan does cite Transportation Goals and Objectives aimed to connect future land uses and promote the development and use of alternative transportation modes.

Public Needs that are addressed:

**Comments and Observations:**

The Town is well equipped to accommodate the proposed growth, and has adopted a MGE and WRE that contemplates a phased growth approach, and envisions that growth to occur in such a way to minimize/avoid a burden on the existing residents of the Town. The Town's Comprehensive Plan, and more specifically adopted MGE; demonstrate the Towns well thought out approach to phased growth that will not overwhelm the build and natural environment.

Shortcomings in Addressing Public Priorities:

**Comments and Observations:**

The most apparent shortcomings are the dated Subdivision Regulations (adopted 4/1/82) and Zoning Ordinance (adopted 12/7/78). The Town has adequate Staff to administer these regulations; however, the Town does not have the technical expertise (or funds to hire consultants) to update these implementation ordinances.

**C. Assessment of PlanMaryland Implementation Strategy Opportunities & Constraints.**

Opportunities for State Agency Implementation:

**Comments and Observations:**

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